

have squandered the Clinton administration's projected 10-year surplus of \$5.6 trillion and have put us into a projected deficit of \$3.5 trillion.

Last Tuesday, the American people told the Republicans that enough is enough and demanded a change in the way that Congress does business. They voted in a Democratic majority to return our country to a path of strong fiscal responsibility and back to the pay-as-you-go system.

Madam Speaker, the current Republican leadership has incurred more foreign debt in these 6 years than the previous 42 Presidents combined incurred. When we assume the majority in January, Democrats are committed to fiscal responsibility, and we will reinstate pay-as-you-go, working effectively as we did in the 1990s when President Clinton and the Congress balanced the budget.

MAKING IT FIRM THAT IT IS ILLEGAL TO BE IN AMERICA WITHOUT PERMISSION

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, according to the Dallas Morning News, "Farmers Branch, Texas, on Monday adopted strict measures against illegals, requiring apartment renters to provide proof of citizenship or residency and making English the city's official language."

"The city also unanimously agreed to let police apply to participate in a Federal program that would enable them to check the residency status of suspects that they arrest and initiate deportation proceedings in certain cases. These measures, believed to be the first of their kind in the State of Texas, brought cheers from some supporters, but sparked anger among some Hispanics."

Madam Speaker, cities across the Nation are taking positive action in dealing with illegals. These are common-sense steps the Federal Government has refused to take for political reasons.

Of course, the pro-illegal immigrant crowd has threatened lawsuits. It seems odd that illegals can use American courts to prevent cities from enforcing laws against illegal entry.

The example of Farmers Branch, Texas, is a statement that cities cannot and will not continue to bear the costs in education, health care and social services of illegals. This Nation must be firm that it is illegal to be in America without permission.

And that's just the way it is.

PROVIDING PROPER OVERSIGHT OF THE ADMINISTRATION

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, since the beginning of the war in Iraq, con-

gressional Republicans have refused to provide any oversight of the Bush administration in its handling of the war.

When no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq, House Republicans refused to investigate how the intelligence could have been so bad.

When the administration sent our troops into combat without the proper body armor, House Republicans refused to hold anyone in the administration accountable.

When milestone after milestone passed without things getting better in Iraq, congressional Republicans refused to hold oversight hearings and allowed the Bush administration to continue with the status quo when a change was clearly needed.

Today, our Nation desperately needs for Congress to do its job and provide real oversight of the administration. When Democrats take control of Congress in January, we vow to provide proper oversight of the actions of this administration. It is something that is required of us all by the U.S. Constitution.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO HELP LOWER PRESCRIPTION DRUGS PRICES FOR AMERICA'S SENIORS

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, millions of American seniors are trying to make the best of the Medicare prescription drug plan that congressional Republicans and President Bush signed into law 3 years ago.

Today, seniors are demanding changes in this program. They want a plan that does not create a giant gap in coverage, where they can lose coverage for months on end and where they still must pay their monthly payments.

The giant doughnut hole, as we call it, leaves many seniors in the predicament of paying for groceries, paying their rent or the drugs they need to live healthier and longer lives. They may cut their pills into two or take them every second or third day. That is a recipe for disaster, and this is not a decision that seniors should have to make in America today.

Democrats have long opposed this doughnut hole, and one of our top priorities next year is to eliminate it by making prescription drugs cheaper. How are we going to do this? It is simple. We are going to do the same thing the Veterans Administration does today, and that is, give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the ability to negotiate on behalf of all seniors for lower drug prices.

Today, American veterans pay 42 percent less for their drugs because of this negotiating authority. If we make prescription drugs cheaper, we can fill in the doughnut hole so seniors no longer fall into it. This is one of our top priorities as we become the majority party in Congress next year.

DEMOCRATS WANT TO WORK WITH REPUBLICANS TO HELP MIDDLE CLASS AMERICANS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, now that the elections are over, it is time for Democrats and Republicans to come together to work in a bipartisan fashion to help all Americans.

Throughout this year, Democrats have talked about a forward-looking agenda, one that encompasses all Americans. We want to expand economic opportunity to millions of Americans who have been left behind by increasing the minimum wage for the first time in 9 years. We want to expand educational opportunities to teens who want to attend college, by cutting interest rates on student loans so that they can better afford college. We also want to help seniors better afford their prescription drugs by cutting drug prices and filling the doughnut hole.

Democrats touted these plans, but that doesn't mean Republicans can't join us in implementing them when the new Congress convenes in January. Raising the minimum wage, helping college students better afford their education and helping seniors pay for their prescription drugs is something we all, Democrats and Republicans alike, should be interested in. We will have the opportunity to follow through on this agenda in January.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 860. An act to provide for the conveyance of the reversionary interest of the United States in certain lands to the Clint Independent School District, El Paso County, Texas.

H.R. 5842. An act to compromise and settle all claims in the case of Pueblo of Isleta v. United States, to restore, improve, and develop the valuable on-reservation land and natural resources of the Pueblo, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3501. An act to amend the Shivwits Band of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Water Rights Settlement Act to establish an acquisition fund for the water rights and habitat acquisition program.

S. 3687. An act to waive application of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to a specific parcel of real property transferred by the United States to 2 Indian tribes in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair